

PhD Assistantship – Forest management for climate adaptation and wildlife

Applications are sought for a funded PhD assistantship to investigate outcomes of ecologically based silvicultural treatments in young forests. The Adaptive Complexity Thinning (ACT) study tests alternative treatments designed to achieve forest restoration and climate change adaptation goals while maintaining habitat for snowshoe hare populations. The PhD student will lead investigations of treatment effects on forest structure and development, as well as remote camera assessment of snowshoe hare habitat use, including snow cover duration and hare coat color (mis)match. Up to eight semesters and three summers of support are available. Compensation includes competitive salary and consideration of tuition, fees, and insurance.

Background. The ACT study aims to advance a science-based forest management approach that balances the potentially competing objectives of forest restoration, climate change adaptation, and conservation of snowshoe hare and Canada lynx. The project is a partnership between the University of Montana, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the US Forest Service (USFS), and The Nature Conservancy (TNC). ACT study replicates are located on BLM, USFS, and TNC lands. The position is supervised by Professor Andrew J. Larson.

Required Qualifications

- Ability to obtain admission to the Forest and Conservation Sciences PhD program
- Demonstrated ability to manage and analyze large datasets using R
- Foundational knowledge of forest dynamics and wildlife habitat development
- Ability to safely conduct field work in all seasons, including leading crews of field technicians
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills with evidence of the ability to work collaboratively

Preferred Qualifications

- Familiarity with remote camera methods for monitoring wildlife populations and/or snowpack attributes
- A record of publication in the peer-reviewed literature
- MS degree in Forestry, Wildlife Biology, Ecology, or related discipline (candidates without a MS will be considered)

Application Procedure and Start Date. The position start date is May or June of 2025. To apply, send a cover letter that explains, with evidence, how you meet the required and preferred qualifications, current CV, unofficial transcripts, and names and contacts of three professional references to Andrew Larson at a.larson@umontana.edu. Include the phrase “ACT Assistantship” in the subject line. Apply by Dec. 9, 2024.

About UM and Missoula. The University of Montana is a place where top-tier students, educators, and researchers thrive. UM is located in [Missoula](#), Montana’s second-largest city with a population of 80,000 residents. Missoula offers a high quality of life, with multiple rivers, trails, and wilderness areas within minutes of campus, and a vibrant arts community including frequent performances by national musical acts. The city is known for its welcoming and inclusive community and is home to a growing population that reflects a broad spectrum of perspectives and experiences, making it one of the more diverse areas in the state. Missoula and the surrounding area host an impactful land management and conservation science community including major federal research labs, land management agencies, and significant conservation and environmental NGOs.